

**Remarks on the Nomination of
Robert B. Zoellick To Be Deputy
Secretary of State**

January 7, 2005

The President. I am so pleased that upon the recommendations of the Secretary of State Designee Rice that Bob Zoellick has agreed to serve as Deputy Secretary of State upon confirmation by the Senate. Condi Rice and Bob Zoellick will form one of the really strong, capable foreign policy teams our country has ever had.

I've known Zoellick for a long time. He's a—he is a fine public servant. I asked him to serve as our trade minister, and he did a fantastic job. And as he departs to the State Department, upon Senate confirmation, I want to assure the American people this administration is committed to free trade. I look forward to finding a replacement for Bob Zoellick that will be able to carry on our desire to spread free trade around the world.

In the meantime, I look forward to a quick confirmation for Condi and Bob so they can go over to the State Department and carry on the foreign policy of this administration. Thank you all very much.

Thanks for serving.

Ambassador Zoellick. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Glad you're going to do it.

Ambassador Zoellick. Thanks.

Secretary-Designate Rice. Mr. President—

The President. Good choice.

Secretary-Designate Rice. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you all. See you in Detroit.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

**Remarks in a Discussion on Asbestos
Litigation Reform in Clinton
Township, Michigan**

January 7, 2005

The President. Thank you. Thanks for coming today. Please be seated. We've got a lot of work to do here. *[Laughter]* Thank you for such a warm greeting, and I want to thank some of our fellow citizens for joining me here on the stage. We're about to have an interesting conversation on a vital issue that confronts our country, and that has to do with asbestos litigation. And I want to thank you all for joining us.

I think you're going to find their stories to be very interesting and very compelling as to why this country needs to act and to solve a problem. One of the reasons people run for office, or at least the main reason they run for office, should be to see problems and solve problems so that the country is better off because of our actions.

I want to thank Al Lorenzo and the good folks here at Macomb Community College for allowing us to use your beautiful facility. I believe that the community college system is a vital part of making sure that America remains a competitive place to do business. After all, one of the ways to ensure that our business sector is strong and viable is to have a workforce that is skilled—that is trained for the skills of the 21st century. And there is no better place than the community college system of America to provide those skills for jobs which actually exist. So thanks for having us here. I'm honored to be here.

Today I traveled from Washington on mighty Air Force One with four Members of the United States Congress from Michigan. I hope they came down to hear this presentation. I suspect they might have liked the accommodations. *[Laughter]* But I'm proud of all four. Congressman Mike Rogers is with us today. Thank you, Mike. Thad McCotter is with us. Congressman, thank you for coming. Joe Knollenberg is with us—Congressman Knollenberg. And finally, Congresswoman Candice Miller has joined us. Thank you, Candice. *[Applause]* It sounds like they've heard of you. That's good. And you brought along husband, Don. I appreciate